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species should be recognized instead of one, the second species to be assigned the name *B. cicutarium* (Sar.) Swartz. To this latter species he assigns as synonyms *B. dichronum* Underwood, *B. brachystachys* Kunze, and *B. virginianum v. mexicanum* Hooker.

*B. cicutarium* he distinguishes from *B. virginianum* on the basis of the persistent leaves which last more than one season, and the comparatively shorter fertile portion. *B. cicutarium*, as recognized, is native in the West Indies and Central America. Typical *B. virginianum* ranges as far south as the State of Hidalgo, Mexico.

HIGH SCHOOL OF COMMERCE,  
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### Notes and News

#### CONCERNING THE PERSERVATION OF NEW FORMS OF FERNS

I find in the January issue of the AMERICAN FERN JOURNAL a reference to a "belated maidenhair" (*A. pedatum*) which is of interest, as it may imply a *sempervivum* form of that species well worth cultivation if the plant had been collected for cultivation instead of, as is too often the case, destroyed by collectors for mere herbarium purposes. In fact the final remark "how much longer it might have survived" rather indicates another instance of botanical vandalism. A parallel case, with one material difference, exists in the case of the deciduous *Cystopteris fragilis*, of which a perfectly green plant was discovered in the Highlands of Scotland some years ago in the winter. The plant was lifted and grown and eventually a fertile frond was sent to me, from which I raised a large number of very robust plants, which proved to be not merely "*sempervirens*" or evergreen, but practically "*sempercrescens*," since they grew all the year round, while the species

(*C. fragilis*) dies down early in the autumn. In my conservatory which is quite cold and in which all plants are frozen in the winter, I have a pot of this fern, now in April, which still carries last year's fronds in a quite green and living condition. This is all due to the fern falling into the hands of a true fern lover instead of a botanist whose only thought is of his cherished graveyard, the herbarium, for which a frond or two at the time would have sufficed, while the precious roots would, if properly treated, have supplied him and his friends with an indefinite supply later on if treated discreetly. I remember another kindred case some years ago, also in the United States, where a collector proudly recorded a new find of which he took all the first crop of fronds in the early summer and then gave a friend the "tip," who went in the autumn and gathered the second one, almost inevitably killing the root outright. I should not like to see such a "triumph" debited to my name. Quite possibly the *A. pedatum* in question would have gifted the horticultural world with an evergreen form of that delightful fern, especially since so many of its kindred, unlike *Cystopteris* are evergreen.

CHAS. T. DRUERY.

#### CHAS. T. DRUERY

In a recent issue of "Garden Life," a London weekly devoted to horticulture, appears a brief sketch of the life of Chas. T. Druery. It is an interesting account of the scientific and literary achievements of this enthusiastic student and grower of ferns. Members of the Fern Society will be interested to know that Mr. Druery was one of the first to receive the Victorian Gold Medal of Honor in Horticulture, and that he is the author of two volumes of verse and several humorous works besides his well known books on British Ferns. The

article is illustrated with a portrait of Mr. Druery and pictures of some products of his skill in fern culture.

In this connection the note appearing on another page will be of especial interest. It was sent as a letter to Mr. Winslow.

#### AN UNUSUAL STATION FOR BOTRYCHIMUM LANCEOLATUM

On the 2d of last July Mr. C. H. Bissell, Mr. C. A. Weatherby and the writer explored a gorge on the farm of Mr. Homer J. Heath, in the northern part of the township of Newfane, Vt. In the woods above the gorge we found a remarkable growth of *Botrychium lanceolatum*. During the half-hour or so that we were traversing this piece of woods we came upon groups of from three to twenty plants every few steps. There must have been thousands of them. *Botrychium ramosum* was also present, but in smaller number.

The writer has seen this plant growing in several localities in western Connecticut and Massachusetts, and eastern and northern Vermont, but always in rather moist rich woods, and often in quite swampy ground. The Newfane station is a rather dry and very steep wooded hillside with a northeasterly slope and an elevation, according to estimates furnished by Mr. L. A. Wheeler, of Townshend, Vt., of about 800 feet above sea level and more than 200 feet above the neighboring river.

AUBURNDALE, MASS.

E. J. WINSLOW.

#### A CORRECTION

In the interests of accuracy, permit me to call your attention to an erroneous statement in your April number. Mr. James A. Bates writes: "I think it was Clute who made the mistake in an early Bulletin of calling *Dicksonia* the fragrant fern." If Mr. Bates

will consult Fern Bulletin, Volume 4, page 48, and the same publication Volume 5, page 15, he will discover that *Dicksonia* was mistaken for the fragrant fern but not by Clute. The man who made the mistake and who listed the *Dicksonia* under the name of a rarer fern in a well known State flora was a much more prominent botanist. It was Clute who first pointed out the error. We have always been taught that New Englanders are committed to plain living and high thinking, but it is apparent that the last mentioned process sometimes slips a cog. The matter of the *Dicksonia* is not of much consequence, yet we feel that we ought to stop this careless kind of thinking at the outset; otherwise, some other misguided fern student may inform the public that he thinks that Clute was the first one to mistake carrots for ferns. Up to the present, however, we have been able to prove an alibi; in fact we have laid in quite a stock of alibis in anticipation of having use for them when the thinking in New England gets to running smoothly.

WILLARD N. CLUTE.

### HYBRIDS IN Equisetum?

In an article entitled "Anatomy as a means of diagnosis of spontaneous plant hybrids" (Science, N. S. 38: 932, 26 Dec 1913), Miss Ruth Holden discusses evidence indicating that plants may be hybrids without showing intermediate external characters. In such cases a study of their anatomy will serve to reveal their real relationships.

For example, a birch growing at the Arnold Arboretum which had been identified as *Betula pumila* was found to possess wood characters entirely different from those of *B. pumila* together with peculiarities of stamen structure with nearly abortive pollen. These facts, together with

the fact that the tree in question was one of a group of seedling birches, several of which had shown also external evidences of hybridity, were taken to indicate a hybrid origin for this tree also.

*Equisetum littorale* has been long suspected in Europe and America to be a hybrid between *E. arvense* and *E. limosum* on the basis of external and internal characters. Similarly material of *E. variegatum Jessupi*, collected on Toronto Island by E. C. Jeffrey, was found to possess peculiar internal characters indicative of hybridism between *E. variegatum* and *E. hyemale*.

The writer of the article is gathering facts about other so-called "varieties" of *Equisetum*, and would undoubtedly be glad to receive material of this sort from different parts of the country. Such material may be sent care of Harvard University.

R. C. B.

#### \$30,000 PAID FERN PICKERS

More than \$30,000 has been paid out in the months of September, October and the first part of November to gatherers of wild ferns in the four Bennington county towns of Woodford, Stamford, Searsburg and Readsboro. The pickers were paid by the piece, four cents a hundred, and as there have been more than 6,000,000 ferns shipped out of the mountains this season, the sum total is easily reached.

The industry is comparatively new and was brought about by the discovery of the florists that the addition of a few ferns as a background for a box of blossom added materially to the value of the purchase in the eyes of a customer, especially in winter. Since it became known that the ferns could be kept all winter in cold storage the business of gathering and retailing has increased rapidly until there are at present many firms

in New York and Massachusetts which give it their entire attention.

After the slopes of the Taconic mountains, which run through the southeastern half of Bennington county, were stripped of their evergreen timber the original growth was followed by a forest of hard wood and with it came the ferns, which in many sections completely covered the ground. Only two varieties are used by the greenhouses, the hardy rock and serrated ferns, for the reason that they are tough and capable of withstanding rough handling to which they are subjected during the picking and shipping.

The pickers are paid four cents a hundred for ferns tied in bunches of 25. Some of the experts have earned at that rate between \$7 and \$8 in a single day. In the last two years the industry has grown to such an extent that the lumber companies which control the mountain land on which the ferns are gathered now lease the picking privileges, instead of permitting free access to the property, as was formerly the case.

The business is rather precarious. Some years the ferns keep well in cold storage and at \$2.50 a thousand, the price charged the florists, good profits are made. Not infrequently, however, there are heavy losses. The ferns, for some reason that has not yet been discovered, turn black or yellow and become worthless.

[From a newspaper clipping]

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### American Fern Society

The recently appointed Treasurer asks all members to remit dues for the current year as promptly as possible. Following a new policy bills will be sent out with the JOURNAL. Members in arrears for 1913 will confer a favor by cancelling their obligation at once and thus